

REMARKS

New claims have been added to improve the style of this application.

Claims 1 - 6 have been rejected as being anticipated by Kenmochi.

New independent claim 7 has been made by combining original claims 1 and 2. New independent claim 8 has been made by combining original claims 1 and 3. The new claims further emphasize the differences between the present invention and Kenmochi.

The independent claims 7, 8 and 11 set forth a U-shaped bridging member. Applicant has reviewed Kenmochi, and finds no teaching nor suggestion in Kenmochi of U-shaped bridging member. Kenmochi therefore cannot anticipate all of the features of new independent claims 7, 8 and 11.

The rejection equates the bridging member of the original claims with element 1c of Kenmochi. Applicant has reviewed element 1c of Kenmochi, and finds this to be a thin skirt portion connecting an operating portion 1a and a thick non-operating portion 1b, column 4 lines 25 - 41.

Applicant notes that skirt portion 1c is a thin sheet and formed so as to surround the operating portion 1a and thereby connects the operating portion 1a to the thick non-operating portion 1b which is outside.

The present invention on the other hand, as set forth in the independent claims, has a bridging member with a U-shape. Element 1c of Kenmochi does not have a U-shape, and therefore does not anticipate the bridging member of the independent claims.

Claim 11 further sets forth that the U-shaped bridging member is arranged in a bridge plane, and this bridge plane is substantially parallel to a key plane where the plurality of keytops are arranged. In the embodiment of present Figs. 2 and 4, the key plane, and the bridge plane, are substantially parallel to the plane of the sheet on which the drawings are presented. In the embodiment of present Fig. 3, the key plane and the bridge plane extend from right-to-left, and in-and-out of the sheet.

Applicant's review of Kenmochi, finds no teaching nor suggestion of any structure, especially a bridge member having a U-shape that is arranged in a plane that is parallel to a plane holding an arrangement of keytops. Claim 11 therefore further defines over Kenmochi.

Claims 9, 10 and 13 set forth that a back or base of the U-shape of the bridging member is connected to a housing. Applicant finds no teaching nor suggestion of a U-shape bridging member in Kenmochi, and therefore Kenmochi cannot teach a base or back of a U-shape member being connected to a housing. Therefore claims 9, 10 and 13 further define over Kenmochi.

Claim 12 further emphasizes how the U-shape bridging member is arranged in the bridge plane, as specifically stating that it is the U-shape itself that is arranged in the bridge plane. Claim 12 therefore further defines over the prior art.

Claim 13 sets forth that ends of legs of the U-shape are connected to the extruded parts. Applicant finds no teaching nor suggestion of any ends of legs of a U-shape being connected to extruded parts in Kenmochi, and therefore claim 13 further defines over Kenmochi.

Claim 14 sets forth that the U-shape bridging member connects two extruded parts.

Applicant notes that element 1c of Kenmochi does not connect two extruded parts, and therefore claim 14 further defines over Kenmochi.

✓ Claim 15 sets forth that the extruded parts and the bridging members are integrated with the keytops by injection molding thermoplastic elastomer urethane. Support for this feature can be found in the present specification on page 5 lines 4 and 15 - 17. Applicant notes that the injection molding of thermoplastic elastomer provides a specific structure. Applicant finds no teaching nor suggestion of this structure in Kenmochi, and therefore claim 15 further defines over Kenmochi.

Original claims 2 - 6 have been objected to because of the phrase "a key switch". The rejection indicates that this phrase should be changed to "the key switch". Applicant has written new claims 8 - 10 to contain this phrase. Applicant notes that claims 12 - 16 use the phrase "a switch". It is Applicant's understanding that the term "a switch" in claims 12 - 16 is acceptable according to U.S. patent regulations. If the Examiner has any specific reasons why this phrase would not be acceptable, the Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate what portion of U.S. patent regulations the objection is based on.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions which would further favorable prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative by telephone to discuss possible changes.

At this time Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, and based on the above amendments and remarks, respectfully solicits allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted
for Applicant,

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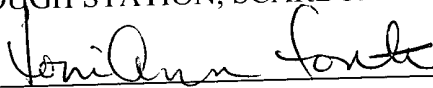
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